

**TO ALL PROSPECTIVE OFFERORS:**

We appreciate your interest in the Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) Program. The General Services Administration (GSA) awards contracts under the Program to thousands of commercial firms each year. This letter provides you with pertinent background information on the MAS Program. We hope you will consider this information in deciding whether or not to submit an offer for a MAS contract and whether it is the right business decision for your company.

Currently, the MAS Program is enormous. The Program is designed to enable Federal Agencies to purchase commercial products and services quickly, efficiently, and at fair and reasonable prices. It enables Federal Agencies to comply with all Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) when “easy-to-use” MAS ordering procedures have been followed. The commercial products and services awarded under MAS contracts are divided into 43 distinct schedules. In total, there are over 18,700 MAS contracts in place, covering over 11,000,000 items, so competition is fierce. Each year, several thousand firms submit offers, and over 3,000 are awarded MAS contracts.

To become a successful MAS contractor requires that your company take a few key steps. Performing due diligence and understanding your commitment and obligations as a MAS contractor is the first step to success under the Program. The companies who have prepared well, understood their commitments and obligations, and have a plan to meet those commitments and obligations have thrived under the Program. In order to better understand the environment of the MAS Program, please visit [www.gsa.gov/gettingonschedule](http://www.gsa.gov/gettingonschedule).

Next, to participate in the MAS Program, an offeror must identify which schedule(s) cover the products and/or services your company wants to offer. Getting on the right schedule(s) is the second step to success. To help you with this task, you may want to look at the following websites:

- [www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov](http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov)
- <http://www.fedbizopps.gov>

Once you have identified the right schedule(s), read and understand the solicitation(s). The terms and conditions it contains are the rules of the road. If you receive a MAS contract, you will be required to follow these rules, which is critical to your success under the MAS Program

One of the most important things you need to understand is that a MAS contract IS NOT a guarantee of future sales. Federal agencies are not required to use the MAS Program. As you have seen, each schedule contains from scores to thousands of contracts already in place and competition is fierce for orders under the MAS Program.

GSA offers training and provides informational material to government buyers about the benefits of the MAS Program. The MAS Program helps reduce acquisition lead time and

provides a wide selection of the state-of-the-art commercial supplies and services. GSA has already determined prices to be fair and reasonable and purchases conducted under the MAS Program do not require a synopsis of the requirement. Although GSA provides information material on the benefits of the Program, GSA does not market or promote specific contracts, does not distribute products of individual firms, and does not steer business to any individual contractor. Once you receive a MAS contract, you will be required to market your products or services to the federal community and other authorized users of the MAS Program. Because purchasing authority is spread out across the federal agencies and other authorized users of MAS contracts, marketing your products or services may not be an easy task. Accordingly, targeted marketing and relationship building is the third step to success.

## **TO HELP YOU DECIDE IF A MAS CONTRACT IS RIGHT FOR YOU**

MAS solicitation numbers are listed on [www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov](http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov). Each solicitation contains vital information relative to a MAS contractor's responsibilities and the Government's expectations if your company is awarded a MAS contract. Familiarizing yourself with these responsibilities and having a business plan to meet them will be critical to your success.

To help you better understand the meaning of key solicitation terms and conditions, here are some helpful ideas:

Go to the Vendor Support Center (VSC) Website at [vsc.gsa.gov](http://vsc.gsa.gov). Find the contractor orientation webcast under the Vendor Training Tab. While this webcast is directed at new contractors, it emphasizes the key contract requirements that they must follow and tells them how GSA will evaluate their performance. Watch this webcast and ensure that you are ready to be an excellent MAS contractor.

On the same Vendor Support Center (VSC) website, review the Steps to Success Publication under the Publications Tab. This document is a general overview of contract requirements; including key reporting requirements you will have to meet.

Identify your competitors. Visit the Schedules e-Library website at [www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov](http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov) and the GSA Advantage website at [www.gsaadvantage.gov](http://www.gsaadvantage.gov). These websites contain information regarding the products and services that current MAS contractors already offer. This will aid you in identifying potential competitors under the MAS Program and help you to further assess your ability to compete for orders, if your company is awarded a MAS contract. You should look at such key information as your competitors' pricing, delivery time, warranty terms, services, and other conditions. Think about how you will be prepared to meet or beat such terms. In addition, you should examine other factors that purchasers under the MAS Program may consider when awarding an order such as your company's past performance and expertise in providing the products and/or services that your company is seeking to offer. Often, purchasers under the MAS Program make their award decision based upon "best value" as opposed to lowest price.

technically acceptable, so you need to assess your ability to compete for orders under all possible award evaluation criteria.

Visit our Schedule Sales Query website at <http://ssq.gsa.gov/> that provides detailed sales information on current MAS contractors. Specifically, you can search to see whether your competitors have successfully sold similar products and/or services under the MAS Program.

Your review and analysis of these websites should allow you to assess the competitive environment for the products and/or services you want to provide. Once you understand the terms you will have to follow and the market you will operate in, you can decide whether a MAS contract is the right investment for your company to make.

Remember, if your company decides to make an offer for a MAS contract and is awarded, your company will have two years to generate your first \$25,000 in sales and must reach that threshold every year thereafter, to keep your contract. If your company is newly established or has had low sales to date (less than \$50,000) in the products and/or services you want to offer under the MAS Program, you may need to recognize the difficulty of meeting this performance requirement of having a MAS contract. If you decide to make an offer under the MAS Program, having a business plan to meet this performance requirement and other performance requirements will be critical to ensuring your success.

Finally, how well you perform under your contract is the fourth and final step to success!

## **YES, I WANT TO SUBMIT AN OFFER**

Excellent. GSA is always looking for highly qualified firms ready to increase competition under the MAS Program. While not all offers receive a MAS contract, in accordance with our statutory authority, the MAS Program is open to all responsible offerors as long as, your company demonstrates that you meet all of our requirements, including pricing.

Typically, it will take 3 – 6 months for your offer to be evaluated and for your company to be awarded a MAS contract. Well prepared and documented offers with competitive pricing are more easily evaluated and therefore may be awarded sooner. Offers requiring lots of corrections and clarifications take a lot longer to be evaluated. To help you submit a complete offer that can easily be evaluated the first time, here are some things that you can do:

- 1) Take the free Center for Acquisition Excellence on-line course “How to Become a Contractor—GSA Schedules Program.” This ten-lesson course describes the features of the MAS Program, how to submit an offer, the contract award process, and how to market supplies and services. To register, go to [www.gsa.gov/fsstraining](http://www.gsa.gov/fsstraining).
- 2) Read the entire solicitation. Each solicitation is posted on the internet at the FedBizOpps website [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov). FedBizOpps is the single point-of-entry for

Federal Government procurement opportunities over \$25,000.

- 3) Attend a free training session offered by GSA on how to obtain a MAS contract. A listing of training events is available at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov) (scroll down to “GSA Events” and click on “GSA Schedules Training.”)
- 4) Submit your offer, making sure that the items you are offering are clearly identified, that your pricing proposal is clearly stated and explained.

Once you submit an offer, GSA will look for several things. We will verify that you have submitted all of the required information and we will use this information to evaluate your offer. We will look at numerous areas including:

- Pricing
- Past Performance
- The products/services are within the scope of the Schedule
- Financial Capability
- Technical
- Subcontracting Plan (if you are not a small business)
- Other regulatory compliance.

Good luck. We want you to be successful, and look forward to the start of a long and successful partnership.

### **NO, I DO NOT WANT TO SUBMIT AN OFFER RIGHT NOW. WHAT OTHER OPTIONS DO I HAVE FOR FEDERAL BUSINESS**

If you decide not to pursue a MAS contract at this time, you can still participate in other Federal Government Acquisitions. In some cases, pursuing other avenues may be even more advantageous.

Seek other Government contracting opportunities at FedBizOpps ([www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov)), which is the single point-of-entry for Federal Government procurement opportunities over \$25,000. Commercial vendors seeking Federal markets can search, monitor, and retrieve solicitations for products and services issued by all Federal Agencies. Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) set-aside procurements estimated between \$2,500 through \$100,000 for small business.

Participate in subcontracting opportunities with companies already under contract to the Government. The U.S. Small Business Administration ([www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)) provides information on subcontracting as well as other topics of interest to companies seeking business opportunities. Existing schedule contractors are always looking for opportunities to subcontract, especially to small, small disadvantaged, woman-owned small, and service disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

Remember, the MAS Program is continually open. Just because this may not be the right moment for you to participate, you may want to reevaluate this decision from time to time.

